

DCPS STRATEGIC PLAN

Pre-Service Listening Sessions Summary

Session Overview:

On August 24, 2022, the day following the Chancellor and Chief of Staff Pre-Service panel introducing the strategic planning timeline, Internal Engagement—in partnership with Strategic Initiatives and LINK Partners—conducted a series of four hour-long listening sessions: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 12:45 – 1:45 p.m., 2:15 – 3:15 p.m.

Each session was designed to follow a prescribed agenda:

- Welcome & Introductions (5 mins)
- SEL Opener (5 mins)
- Strategic Plan Overview
 - 2017 – 2022 Capital Commitment Recap
 - Timeline for this next phase
- Discussion/Listening Session (30 mins)
- Questions (5 mins)
- Next Steps (5 mins)

The sessions were largely attended by classroom educators with some school-based mental health team members also in attendance. The sessions were not recorded, and participant names were not collected to maintain the community commitments of candor and anonymity.

Generally, the sessions followed the prescribed agenda and proved to be interactive for the sharing of frank feedback. The exception to this is session 1, which quickly devolved into an airing of grievances. The engagement team made the decision to redirect the agenda and instead gave staff the floor to be heard. Dissatisfaction laid bare included tensions due to contract negotiations and a serious and damaging lack of trust of Central Services.

As sessions progressed, we were able to engage staff more effectively around the engagement questions and collected notes and observations. Listed below are the questions we were seeking feedback on.

- **Question 1:** What can we, as DCPS staff and educators, continue or improve upon to ensure all students feel welcomed and affirmed in our school communities?
- **Question 2:** What can we, as DCPS staff and educators, continue or improve upon to accelerate learning so that all students can reach their full potential?
- **Question 3:** What can we, as DCPS staff and educators, continue or improve upon to make sure all students have the academic, social, and emotional supports they need to thrive?
- **Question 4:** What can we, as DCPS staff and educators, continue or focus to create and promote equitable and inclusive opportunities and outcomes?

- We need to address our language; acceleration is not equitable and does not address systemic and personal barriers (hints at speed over quality)

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- More opportunities (with less difficult processes) to implement experiential learning.
- More technological equity across schools

What can we, as DCPS staff and educators, continue or improve upon to make sure all students have the academic, social, and emotional supports they need to thrive?

- Importance of showing students and families love and compassion
- Get to know students and families on a personal basis to meet their needs
- Want to know more about partnerships and resources that can supplement instruction

What can we, as DCPS staff and educators, continue or focus to create and promote equitable and inclusive opportunities and outcomes?

- Incorporate history and cultural competency into day-to-day school offerings (non-academic)
- More partnerships and field trips with local museums to supplement cultural learning
- Need more awareness of resources available across the district to support equity and inclusion

Additional Lessons Learned.

- Non-DCPS engagement team members will be provided more information and resources to mitigate confusion from DCPS-specific acronym use.
- It must be made explicit at the outset that we are collecting feedback are not able to address all staff grievances.
- Virtual sessions with large numbers of attendees are difficult spaces for all voices to be heard equitably.
- Relatedly, session capacity should be capped at 20 participants to allow for more equity of voice and management of the listening space.